Open Contracting
Fact Sheet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

✅ Open contracting has quickly become one of the most popular policy areas for reform among members of the [Open Government Partnership (OGP)](#).

✅ With one in three commitments delivering strong results, open contracting ranks as one of the most effective policy areas for OGP reforms.

✅ Next steps for OGP members include raising data quality in terms of scope, machine-readability, and linkages with other datasets, as well as creating feedback loops where governments encourage and act on public comments regarding procurement data.

WHY OPEN CONTRACTING?

Open contracting consists of disclosure and citizen engagement throughout the entire procurement process, including planning, tendering, awarding, implementation, and monitoring. It increases competition, improves public service delivery, creates better feedback loops, and ensures better value for money. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, open contracts are urgently needed to show where stimulus dollars are really going, when vaccines will be delivered, and how much they will cost.

STATUS QUO

➜ **Higher quality data needed:** High-quality contracting data is critical in ensuring its usefulness to the public. Only one in ten OGP countries meet all of the key elements of open data disclosure for contracting, including free, machine readable, openly licensed, and available for bulk download.
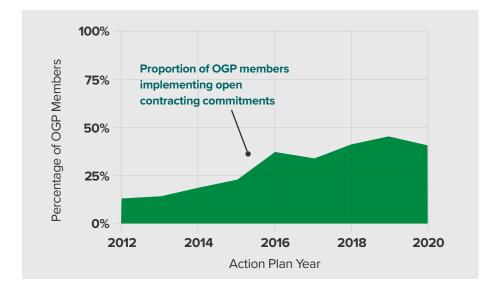
➜ **Participatory elements are growing:** Public participation is essential in monitoring and improving data quality, improving competitiveness, and evaluating the validity of data. Accountability mechanisms are also necessary for the public to trigger investigations and potential sanctions for violations. Although only one-third of OGP open contracting commitments have participatory elements and only one-tenth are related to public accountability, more open contracting commitments have involved civic participation in recent years.

Commitment data analyzes all commitments through the 2020 action plan cycle. As of 2020, OGP consisted of 98 national and local members.

Open
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Partnership

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COMMITMENT PROGRESS

Open contracting has become a much more popular focus among OGP members in recent years (see figure below). Just ten percent of members focused on open contracting in the early years of OGP, whereas nearly half of members now have ongoing commitments in this area. Currently, 20 OGP members are implementing open contracting commitments from their 2019 or 2020 action plans. Altogether, 58 OGP members have made 110 total open contracting commitments.

Percentage of OGP Members

Proportion of OGP members implementing open contracting commitments

Action Plan Year

WHAT ARE OGP MEMBERS DOING?

➜ **Creating open registries of contractors**

➜ **Implementing the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS)**

➜ **Engaging citizens and CSOs in monitoring contracting data**

WHERE TO NEXT

The following recommendations summarize key actions for OGP members to implement:

Information Disclosure

➜ Identify and consult stakeholders before developing a contracting platform to understand user demands.

➜ Consider focusing open contracting reforms at the sector level to target particular high-risk areas such as extractives and health.

➜ Ensure data is open, usable, and complete according to standard guidelines.

➜ Make data interoperable with other systems, such as beneficial ownership registries and government spending data.

Civic Participation and Accountability

➜ Establish feedback mechanisms for citizens to act on procurement data, such as through audits, flagging systems, or hotlines.

➜ Close feedback loops by responding to and acting on citizen feedback.

➜ Collect and disclose disaggregated contracting data on women-owned businesses.

➜ Collaborate with citizens to design gender-responsive policies related to procurement.

NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

Recent Results

Ukraine - Engaging Citizens to Monitor Public Procurement (2016)

In 2016, Ukraine launched DOZORRO, a public procurement monitoring platform that enables citizens to submit and track feedback. Since then, more than 700,000 users have uncovered over 30,000 violations of public procurement rules and principles. Most importantly, the government has taken concrete steps to act on the public feedback, such as by changing tenders and initiating formal investigations.

Finland - Making Procurement Data User-Friendly (2017)
Prior to 2017, information related to state procurement was only available to organizations who went through the lengthy process to request information. Finland committed to creating an open access service for state procurement data in their third OGP action plan, emphasizing accessibility and usability for citizens. Since the online service was published in late 2017, it has won multiple national and international awards, particularly for its user-friendly design.

Argentina - Opening Up Contracting in the Health Sector (2017)
Prior to this 2017 commitment, Argentina's National Institute of Social Services for Retirees and Pensioners did not make information related to their purchases of medicines and medical supplies publicly available. To increase access to information, Argentina published health contracting information that included agreements signed with laboratories, open data on individual purchases, and a list of most-procured medications.

Commitments to Watch

Nigeria - Increasing Citizen Monitoring in Procurement (2019)
Building on their 2017 commitment that launched an online open contracting portal, Nigeria is currently working on the monitoring and accountability aspect of procurement procedure. In addition to improving the online system, the commitment calls for capacity building efforts for CSOs and citizens, including gender-focused CSOs, to increase their capabilities in monitoring the published datasets.
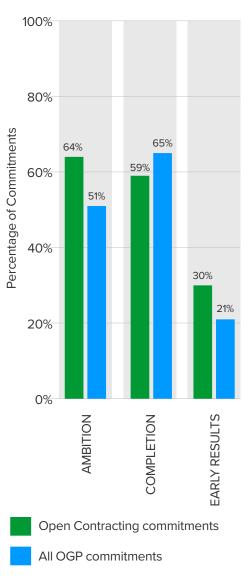
Colombia - Ensuring COVID-19 Procurements are Transparent (2020)

In its most recent action plan, Colombia committed to developing an active transparency strategy in public finances using its budget transparency portal to publish open data on resources allocated to cross-cutting policies on gender equality, implementation of the Peace Agreement and COVID-19 emergency response. The initiative includes publishing information on public contracts and emergency COVID-19 related procurements in open data format to achieve traceability of public resources.

IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), open contracting commitments tend to have higher ambition and stronger early results than other OGP commitments.

Commitment Performance

Bar chart — Percentage of Commitments:

	AMBITION	COMPLETION	EARLY RESULTS
Open Contracting commitments	64%	59%	30%
All OGP commitments	51%	65%	21%

■ Open Contracting commitments
■ All OGP commitments

Ambition - Ambitious commitments are those that the IRM finds would make transformative changes if fully implemented.

Early Results - Strong early results indicate the commitment made significant improvements to government openness.